

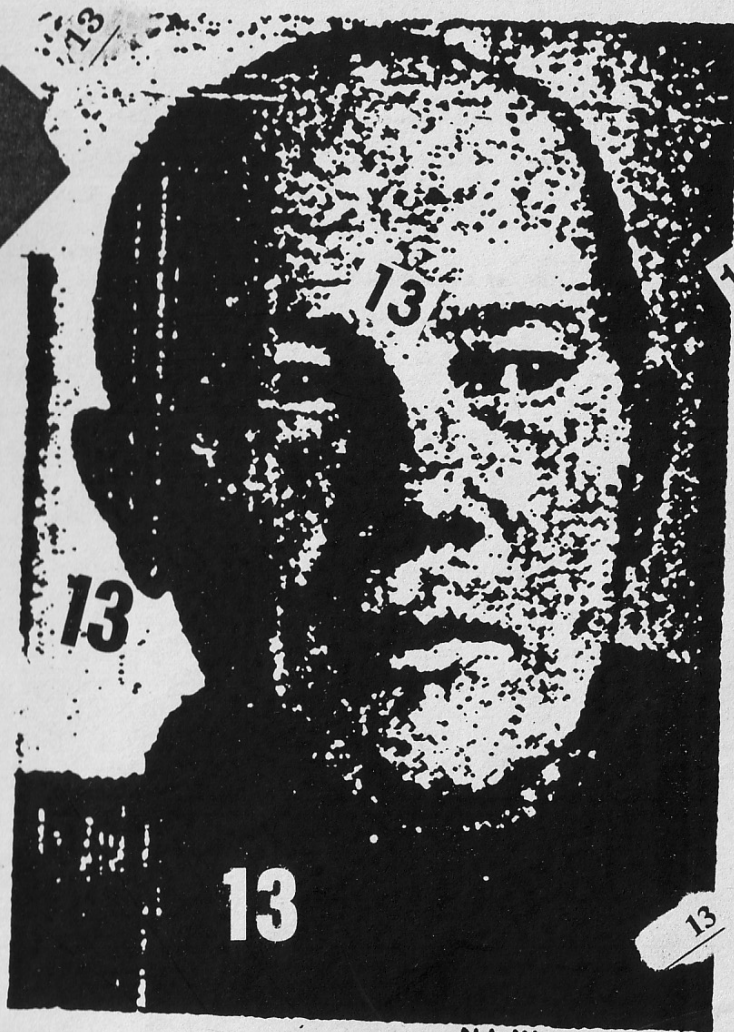
P.O.BOX

Edita Merz Mail

Apdo.9326 08080 BCN

Marzo '95

Nº 7



Ray Johnson

Nik Kleinberg, 1964

13

13

EDITORIAL

Informaba P.O.Box en el suplemento al nº 6 mes de febrero del suicidio de Ray Johnson el pasado 14 de enero en Sag Harbor - Long Island (N.Y.), este número está dedicado íntegramente al que fuera fundador de la N.Y. Correspondance School y tal como informábamos en P.O.Box nº 6, se está celebrando en el momento de la redacción de este número la muestra de Fax Art "PRAY FOR RAY, IN A AMEMORY OF RAY JOHNSON" organizada por The Administration Centre - Guy Bleus en el Begijnhof, Centrum Voor Kunsten en Hasselt (Belgica), de la que informaremos en próximos números.

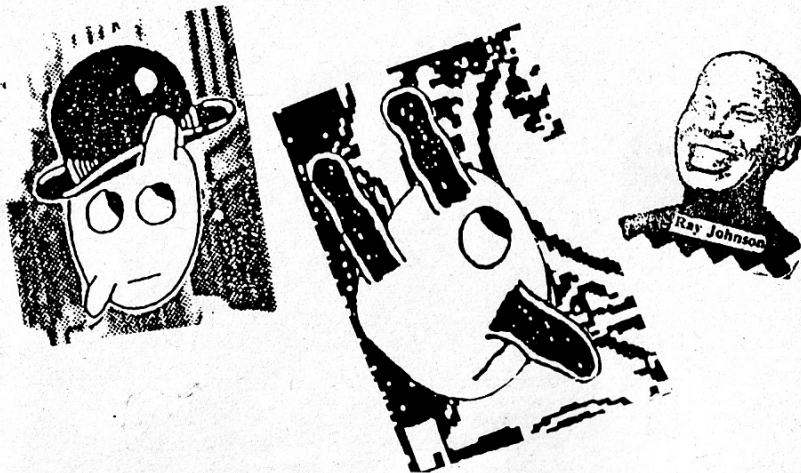
Ray Johnson nació en 1927 en Detroit (Michigan), ya en los años 40 usó la correspondencia artística con sus amigos, fue alumno de la experimental Black Mountain College en Carolina del Norte, del que fue profesor Joseph Albers, en la que encontramos a John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg y otros. Contemporáneo de Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns y el grupo Fluxus, fue considerado iniciador del Pop Art mucho antes que el propio Warhol, la utilización del collage de figuras de la "cultura popular" como James Dean, Elvis son anteriores a las del rey del Pop Art. Performer en N.Y. en los 60 nunca fue entroncado en el grupo Fluxus, ni en el Pop Art, ni en el arte geométrico, ni en ninguna de las escuelas o movimientos de la época, ni tan solo en el Mail Art.

Sus obras han sido expuestas en todo el mundo y es a pesar de ello "El más famoso artista desconocido del mundo"(*).

En la portada de P.O.Box y en la hoja de sellos enviada a P.O.Box por Gerard Barbot de N.Y. aparece el número 13, poema póstumo con el que Ray se despide de este mundo. El viernes 13 se registra en la habitación 247 (2+4+7) de un hotel un hombre de 67 (6+7) años, a la mañana siguiente a las 7:15 (7+1+5) desaparece para siempre.

El material que aparece reproducido en este número consta de reproducción de diarios y notas enviadas por Gerard Barbot y parte del archivo de la correspondencia que hemos mantenido con Ray Johnson hace dos años.

(*) Parte de este texto está traducido de la nota de Mark Blok (Enero'95), reproducido en estas páginas.



RAY JOHNSON 1927-1995

Ray Johnson 1927-1995

(This time it's for real)

The following message was sent out over the Internet on Sunday, January 15, 1995. I wrote it quickly, from memory. An updated, probably more accurate, version will follow.

I'm sorry to announce that Ray Johnson, the founder of the New York Correspondance School and a man who playfully announced his own death many times, died for real this weekend.

He drowned during a visit to Sag Harbor, New York. He was pulled from the water at 12:35pm Saturday afternoon, January 14, 1995. He was fully clothed- in a typical outfit for him- levi's, a wool sweater, a levi jacket and a wind breaker. He was last seen around 7pm Friday night after checking into the Barron's Cove Inn in Sag Harbor, near the end of Long Island, NY. Sag Harbor is on the north shore of Long Island, about a two hour drive from his home in Locust Valley, a journey he appears to have made in order to do some drawings at the estate of Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner.

The weather was unusually mild for this time of year. Ray was fond of the water. He often took walks along the shore at Oyster Bay near his home. He was also prone to walking out on piers and docks. There were several near the area where he was found on Saturday. He told me on the phone recently "I'm going to do my exercises," that he was "working on a washboard stomach" by doing "rowing exercises on the beach with rocks." And that he would "walk with rocks" as weights and that he was "feeling very fit."

Ray turned 67 years old on the 16th of October. He was going strong, remarkably fit for a man of that age. He ate no meat, didn't drink, smoke or partake of recreational drugs. He worked from morning until night, often with the television on in the background. As usual, he was still making up new incarnations of his Correspondance School, the latest one I had heard of being the "Taoist Pop Art School." He had taken up photography in recent years and took daily walks where he would make photos. I also noticed that only weeks ago he had finally retired the rubber stamp with his return address on it that he had used for years in favor of a new one. I had meant to ask him about that.

Born in 1927 in Detroit Michigan, Ray Johnson's first experiences using the mail as a medium for art have been documented as early as 1943 in a correspondence with his friend Arthur Secunda. In the late 40's he attended the experimental Black Mountain College in North Carolina where he studied with Joseph Albers and Buckminster Fuller among others. He

has influenced thousands of people, from other Black Mountain faculty like John Cage and Willem and Elaine DeKooning to his contemporaries like Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns and the Fluxus group (whom he met when he moved to New York in the 50's) to an entire generation of younger artists who called him "the granddaddy of mail art."

History may also eventually see Ray Johnson as the first Pop artist. His 1955 collages using the images of James Dean and Elvis pre-date Andy Warhol's and most of his contemporaries by several years. In addition to making elegant collages, which he called 'moticos,' Ray hosted many happenings and events at various locations around Manhattan in the 1960's. These actions drew everyone in the art world and started the cross-pollination of personalities that became his Correspondance School. He would send things to friends and strangers alike, asking them to add to them and send them on to another person, often using his unique brand of intuitive word play as his guide. Some of this activity is documented in *The Paper Snake* published by Dick Higgins' Something Else Press. He has been called "the most famous unknown artist in the world."

nothing

Ray lived on Suffolk Street on the Lower East Side until 1968 when he was mugged- around the same time- if not the same day- that his friend Andy Warhol was shot by Valerie Solanas. He decided to leave the city and his friends artist Richard Lippold and collector Arturo Schwartz reportedly were instrumental in his moving to "the Pink House" on 7th Street in Locust Valley, from which he never moved. He worked there, almost hermit-like with the exception of his voracious appetite for phone calls and correspondence, mysteriously and prolifically for over 25 years.

Many people wanted to show his work but he preferred his quiet admiration of the sage Lao Tse. His last major show was at the Nassau County Museum of Art in the mid-eighties and a gallery show in the 90's in Philadelphia of his "A Book About Modern Art." A catalogue raisonne' was in the works. He had recently done one of his informal non-performances which he called "nothings" at a gallery in Long Island. He told me in one of our last phone calls, "Will you come to my show at Sandra Gering in January? I'm doing a half a nothing. I can't decide whether to do it in the first half or the second half."

Many of us who know each other in the art world and its fringes have that pleasure because of Ray Johnson. As the extent of his influence on 20th century art and "letters" continues to be uncovered, we will surely miss Ray Johnson, the man. In spite of his Taoist fondness of nothing, Ray was really something.

-Mark Bloch

January 15, 1995
PO Box 1500 NY NY 10009 USA
markb@echonyc.com

Ray Johnson, 67, Pop Artist Known for His Work in Collage

By CAROL VOGEL

Ray Johnson, a collage artist who was a pioneer in using images from popular culture, died on Friday in Sag Harbor, L.I. He was 67 and lived in Locust Valley, L.I.

A spokesman for the Sag Harbor Police Department said that Mr. Johnson checked into the Baron's Cove Inn in Sag Harbor on Friday afternoon and either fell or jumped from the Sag Harbor-North Haven bridge that evening. The death is still under investigation, the spokesman said.

Raymond E. Johnson was born in Detroit and went to Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where he studied with Josef Albers and Robert Motherwell.

He came to New York in 1948 and began producing geometric paintings that were shown along with the work of such artists as Ad Reinhardt, Leon Polk Smith and Charles Olson in exhibitions mounted by the American Abstract Artists Group. By the mid-1950's, influenced by Cy Twombly and Robert Rauschenberg, Mr. Johnson began

producing collages, some of which centered on popular cult figures like Elvis Presley and James Dean. Also in the late 1950's, he made a number of small collages from overpainted printed images cut into strips and then rearranged.

Besides being one of the earliest Pop artists, Mr. Johnson became known for creating whimsical works known as "mail art," art created out of scraps of correspondence. In 1968, he founded the New York Correspondence School, an international postal network whose members exchanged works and objects through the mail. Like Joseph Cornell's work, Mr. Johnson's art combined deadpan realist drawing, painting, lettering and found objects as well as abstract mosaic elements. He enjoyed creating works that combined verbal and visual punning.

Mr. Johnson's work was the subject of several one-man exhibitions and was shown at the Massena County Museum of Fine Art in 1964 and at the Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia in 1991. The artist was represented first by the Marian



Mr. Johnson, 1964

Ray Johnson

Willard Gallery and later the Richard Feigen Gallery, both in Manhattan.

His work is in the permanent collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

No immediate family members survive.

Friends of an Enigmatic Artist See a Riddle in His Death

By PETER MARKS

Special to The New York Times

SAG HARBOR, L.I., Feb. 10 — If Ray Johnson lived an enigmatic life, his death has proved to be the ultimate riddle.

In the weeks since the police fished his body out of an icy cove by this old fishing village, anguished friends and admirers of the eccentric artist — a man largely unknown to the general public but considered a genius by many in the art world — have been racking their brains, rereading his last correspondence, even retracing his last steps as they try to uncover what many of them believe must be the hidden meaning of his strange death.

The body of the 67-year-old artist was found floating 50 feet offshore on Jan. 14, an apparent suicide by drowning. But the reasons he might have killed himself elude both the police and his friends and fans. Although some tantalizing clues emerged after his death, he had told no one of his plans to make the 50-mile drive from his

home in Locust Valley to Sag Harbor, where, on the evening of Jan. 13, he jumped from a highway bridge over Sag Harbor Cove and was last seen backstroking into the distance, the police say.

What torments many who knew Mr. Johnson — a friend of the late Andy Warhol and an artist whose collages have been exhibited in major museums around the world, including the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art — is not only the question of why, but whether the artist left clues in the pieces of art he mailed to them, or perhaps in the surroundings he chose for his death. For if there is any belief that unites his friends about the last day of his life, it is that Ray Johnson would never have passed up such a dramatic moment in which to impart a message.

"The way that this occurred, was there something from the way it unfolded that Ray meant us to see?" asked William K. Dobbs, a Manhattan lawyer who had known Mr. Johnson for more than a dec-

ade. "Were we supposed to glean something from this beside the fact that he was dead?"

Even the police, for whom a suicide investigation is often an open-and-shut affair, consider Mr. Johnson's death a mystery. "This is one of the strangest cases I've ever been involved in," said Joseph J. Lalacci, Sag Harbor's Police Chief. "I've got to tell you, it's like doing a gigantic puzzle."

Compounding the mystery, Mr. Johnson, despite a vast network of friends, left no will or instructions about what to do with his house, his artwork or even his body. For four weeks his body has lain in the morgue of the Suffolk County Medical Examiner's Office in Hauppauge, as a lawyer hired by his two closest friends searched for relatives who might inherit his estate and decide what to do about his burial. He was single and had lived alone for many



Ray Johnson

The artist Ray Johnson, who died Jan. 13, is in a photo taken by a friend.

Continued on Page 66

Death of an Enigmatic Artist Puzzles His Friends

Continued From Page 37

years in a small frame house on a street just off Locust Valley's main thoroughfare.

The lawyer, John Ritter of Locust Valley, has found 11 cousins as far away as California, but no answers to the disturbing questions about Mr. Johnson's death. It seems to him that Mr. Johnson left his estate in chaos intentionally. Why else, he wonders, would the artist have opened his safe deposit box two days before his death — and then hidden the key?

"It seems to me the key is deliberately missing," Mr. Ritter said. "This is like a grand collage, and I've got to find all these pieces and markers and where they're pointing me."

Mr. Ritter is not the only one. Over the past weeks, dozens of Mr. Johnson's friends from all over the country have called the Sag Harbor police, inquiring about the death and, in some cases, offering theories. In one instance, a woman from California faxed Chief Ialacci a four-page letter in which she interpreted the references to death in a piece of "mail art" Mr. Johnson had sent her as foreshadowings of the artist's suicide.

Others have traveled to Sag Harbor to see if the landscape itself yielded a clue that could resolve their confusion: Was Mr. Johnson ill? Did everyone who had spoken to him in the days before he died miss indications of depression or despair? Norma Dill, a spokeswoman for the Suffolk County Medical Examiner's Office, says a final determination of the cause of death is pending the results of a toxicology report.

"The whole core of Ray was this conundrum, the enigma and the subtlety and the play of images that intersected," said Edward Lieber, an artist and friend of Mr. Johnson's who visited Sag Harbor after learning of his death. He found a rich trove of potential clues, all linked to Mr. Johnson's love of wordplay and coincidence.

For instance, Mr. Johnson left his Volkswagen parked in front of a 7-Eleven convenience store, a block from the bridge. To Mr. Johnson's friends, such an act would not be unintentional. "Seven-eleven is obvious, in terms of chance and the throw of the dice," Mr. Lieber said. Then there was the recurrence of the number 13 — Mr. Johnson died on Friday the 13th, and the number pops up in several instances. The three digits of the motel room he checked into two hours before his death, Room 247, add up to 13, as do the digits in the time that two teenagers saw him in the water that



Collages focusing on James Dean and Elvira Presley.

evening, 7:13, as do the digits in his age, 67.

But for Mr. Lieber, the strongest indication Mr. Johnson had been planning something came during a phone conversation they had the day before he died. At the time he thought it was just idle chat, the kind of thing Mr. Johnson said a thousand times. Now, he is haunted by the words.

"He said to me, 'I have a new project, the biggest I've ever undertaken, the most important one in my life.'"

Mr. Johnson was a kind of scamp of the art world, an iconoclast who flouted convention and sometimes seemed to deliberately sabotage his own career. Though he was revered by other influential artists for his elaborate collages, many of which reflected his fascination with celebrity and pop culture, his fragile ego sometimes got in the way of wider acclaim. For long stretches of his career, he refused to sell his work, at least through conventional channels, and sometimes became embroiled in fights even with college galleries that wanted to show his work.

"Ray was the author of his own destiny," said Richard Felgen, a New York art dealer who represented Mr. Johnson for many years. Mr. Felgen says that he loved Mr. Johnson and much of his work, which was collected by artists like Warhol and Jasper Johns. But Mr. Johnson's ambivalence about the commercial as-



pects of art made him nearly impossible to work with.

"I think Ray will become famous after his death, because he won't be around to impede the dissemination of his work," Mr. Felgen said.

His rebellion against the art world was both quirky and wildly theatrical. One time in the 1970's, recalled Toby Spiselman, one of Mr. Johnson's closest friends, the artist be-

Tantalizing hints prompt a search for hidden meanings.

came disenchanted with a show of his work that was about to open in Vancouver, British Columbia.

"Ray had gone into the gallery and removed all the works from the walls — and left one drop of blood on the wall," Ms. Spiselman recalled. "Then he stomped out."

Beside the collages, Mr. Johnson's main preoccupation, and what attracted a following outside the mainstream art world, was his championing of what came to be known as mail, or correspondence, art. He and hundreds of his correspondents, through a loose-knit network he called the New York Correspondence School, sent artwork back and forth in the mail; many of his were adorned with bunny heads that came to be his trademark.

Almost everything about him was a contradiction. Though friends say he lived frugally and never appeared to hold a job, \$400,000 was found in his various bank accounts after his death, the Sag Harbor police say. While he often scoffed at his lack of fame, he was preoccupied with how and where he was mentioned in the

press. "In some ways he was very indifferent," said David Bourdon, an art critic who befriended Mr. Johnson and wrote about him in the Village Voice and other publications. "In other ways he was absolutely rabid about seeing his name in print."

In recent months, say those who knew him, Mr. Johnson betrayed no sense that anything had changed in his life, or that he might soon end it. Katie Seiden, a sculptor from Sea Cliff whom he had befriended in 1980 and who saw him twice a month, said encounters with him were always stylized mini-performances in which his goal often was to confound. The encounters were always entertaining. "You didn't say, 'What did that mean?' — you went along with it," she said.

Sometimes he called such an event "a Ray Johnson nothing." He staged one for Ms. Seiden at a Sea Cliff gallery a couple of weeks before he died. There was nothing on the walls, she said. Mr. Johnson simply placed some photocopied bunny heads on the floor, and left.

About the final Ray Johnson nothing, Ms. Seiden, like so many who loved him, is suitably confounded. What was the message? Was there a message?

A few days after he died, a postcard addressed to Mr. Johnson arrived in Locust Valley. On the card, which bore a Los Angeles postmark, someone had written the date "1-12-95." It was decorated with a bunny head with Mr. Johnson's likeness, and it was signed "Ray Johnson."

"If you are reading this, I must be dead," it said.

Whether it is genuine, no one seems to know.

Material enviado por Gerard Barbot (NY)



The Riddle of Ray Johnson's Suicide

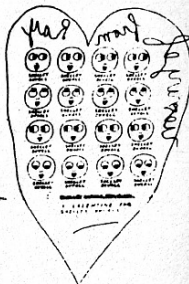
VOICE January 31, 1986

BACKSTROKING INTO OBLIVION

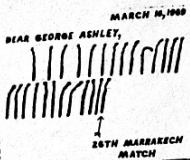
No one liked a riddle better than Ray Johnson. Puns and wisecracks and word games were central to the artist, whose work, for all its fragmentary and ephemeral nature, had the ornery assurance of a Zen kōan. So it was both "a surprise and no surprise at all," as a friend later claimed, when news got out that the Pop collagist and founder of the New York Correspondence School had leapt from a bridge in Sag Harbor on January 13 and backstroked into oblivion, ending his life without warning and bequeathing a final riddle to his friends. ♦ Under a bright moon on a warm winter evening, the 67-year-old

The Riddle of Ray Johnson's Suicide

artist apparently jumped 20 feet into Sag Harbor Cove from the unnamed bridge that connects North Haven and Sag Harbor. He drifted for a time in the frigid water before he drowned. Two hours earlier, Johnson had checked into Baron's Cove Inn and taken a \$95 second-floor room with a clear view of the bridge and the cove. Around seven o'clock, he drove the short distance from the hotel to a 7-Eleven at the foot of the bridge and parked. A bottleful of Valium from an old prescription was later found in his car. Wearing a blue windbreaker, Johnson walked to the top of the bridge and scrambled over a hip-high safety railing. ♦ The splash was heard by two teenage girls who had been hanging out under the bridge. When they darted to the top, what they saw was a fully dressed man leisurely backstroking away from land. The two then ran a short distance to town for help, but found the adults they alerted unconcerned and the police station shut for the evening. Someone left a message on the Sag Harbor Police Department's answering machine. But it wasn't until the following afternoon that Johnson's body was accidentally discovered by a local man who'd dropped his wife off at the Harborview Medical Center and then taken a walk by the shore. ♦ All his life Johnson had been devoted to symbolism and nagged by reminders of his own semiobscure. Few people in the artworld were unaware of Ray Johnson's name. Yet his work was rarely discussed in recent years and it had been some time since he had had a gallery or a gallery show. Even as he took his own life, Johnson somehow failed to get himself noticed. Informed of Johnson's suicide, a painter friend remarked that it was a "good career move."



By
Guy Trebay



To people in the art world, Ray Johnson's reputation was formed in equal parts of talent, ubiquitousness, and eccentricity. "I always said that he'd never be famous in his lifetime," says art critic David Bourdon, who wrote the catalogue essay for a 1986 show of Johnson's collages at the Nassau County Museum of Fine Art.

"His personality was a big deterrent. Ray was a pest. He was rough on dealers. He was rough on collectors. But the art market loves nothing better than an artist who commits suicide." The art market, he says, "loves the legend of the unappreciated artist."

It was not unknown for Johnson to appear at his gallery on the final day of a show and snatch all the work away. "Dealers 'ad nothing to sell," says Bourdon. "He didn't accept the idea of leaving work in the back room, or people buying on time." When his collages sold at auction, Johnson would sometimes track down the buyers and demand to know how much they'd paid. "Or he'd call four times in a day and ask who was Natalie Wood's costar in such and such a movie," explains Bourdon. "I always said that without the impediment of Ray's personality there'd be a lot of interest in the work."

Writing to a friend in the 1970s, Johnson claimed that "whether something dramatic or nothing happens, it is all the same to me." He meant this philosophically. The truth is that Johnson wished as deeply for recognition as most of us do, and obtained what measure of it he could from the New York Correspondence School network and from his few devoted friends. "In the next century, people will say, 'He was among you, what fools you were,'" says William Wilson, a critic-novelist and Johnson's friend of 40 years. In Johnson, Wilson saw an argument for life lived "as an aesthetic construction."

"Ray was so brilliant. He was like this reservoir," says artist Edward Lieber, who spoke to Johnson weekly. "He knew who everyone was. He knew

all the people who punctuated the art and social scene," of the past half century. "He knew obscure or famous things about everyone. And he could interlock all these things, time past, the present, imaginative time in his work."

According to friends, Johnson was obsessed with symbolism and the importance of gesture. "Why he killed himself will never be known," says Lieber. "But the meanings are in the details." Johnson would not have failed to note, says Lieber, that on Friday the 13th, a man of 67 (6 + 7) checked into room 247 (2 + 4 + 7) and

doing these evasions all his life."

Johnson was nothing if not deliberate. Gifted with a droll cast of mind, great graphic skills, and a range of memory that drew astonishing connections between Pop and camp and official culture, between celebrity and obscurity, Johnson was also naturally playful in his art. Ephemeral as it was, his work

gave out a pure bolton of meaning that lingered for years," as John Russell once wrote. "Lists, addresses, dates, ephemeral allusions, terms of speech that soon went out of style—all these men up in Ray Johnson's letters, where dead words get up and dance and the small change of human communication is dipped in gold."

My own experience of Ray Johnson's mailings dates to the 1970s, when he was in the habit of posting drawings of Napoleon's penis, laundry lists, watch parts, or photocopies of Deborah Kerr's autograph, and recycling annotated, doodled-on mail from the Canadian publishers of *Fit* magazine. For every mail art piece that Johnson launched, 10 others were returned by his passionate correspondents. Johnson's was the best chain letter ever delivered, the only one not ripe with superstitious menace, despite the fact that an envelope might contain such eerie detritus as an egg carton filled with dead bees, or a box of laundry blanching, or notes from Anna Banana, Joseph Cornell, Yoko Ono, or Eleanor Antin, or a rattlesnake hide. His mailings have only one point of intersection, one common reference: Johnson himself.

Johnson's Correspondence Art (pictured here)

for symbolism, in art and in life.

prepared to kill himself. "I see this as a clear, rational decision," says Wilson, the last of his friends to speak to the artist. "I don't know what the grounds of the decision were. I know that if Ray thought he had a terminal disease he would have killed himself: it's his style. He would not want the physical intimacy of medical care." According to a preliminary report by the medical examiner, Johnson's organs were in good health. "I also know that water imagery was a recurrent theme," Wilson continues. "He often wrote the Staten Island Ferry and there was a boat on the overboard. He was obsessed with the details of Natalie Wood's death by drowning. But, really, anyone who knew Ray can tell you that, if you were out for evening with him, he might suddenly say goodnight and disappear. He'd been



the North Carolina Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art never owned one until Johnson contrived to spirit a piece into the museum's library collection. A "bunny" cartoon of William de Kooning, it was later included in Chuck Close's celebrated "Portraits" installation.

But it's Johnson's correspondence that most fans consider his major contribution. Conducted on a scope that almost defies com-

prehension, much less elucidation, it continued until his death. Friends who visited Johnson's house after he died found no explanatory letters, and few domestic objects inside the tidy, gray, two-story clapboard in Locust Valley. "It was an eerie spectacle," said one. "Nearly piled up boxes containing this huge, huge archive" dating back to Black Mountain College and Pop art's early days. "The image was of the cell of a monk."

Johnson was evidently healthy when he died, solvent (he had \$1700 in his wallet when he was found), sober, in good spirits, and readying himself to produce a catalogue raisonné of his work. He had recently had a new roof put on his house. "I spoke to him not long ago," said Close. "I couldn't tell if he was happy or sad; he had that same flat affect always." If anything, Johnson seemed to friends uncommonly optimistic.

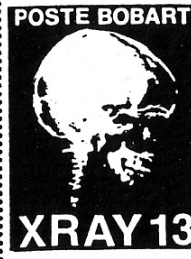
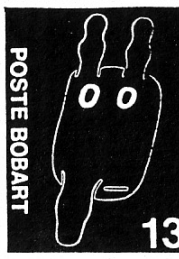
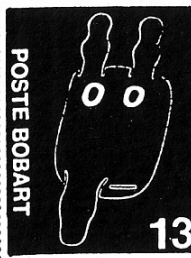
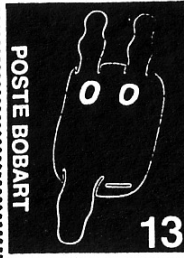
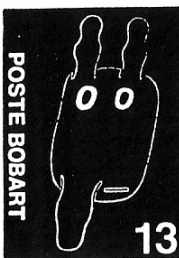
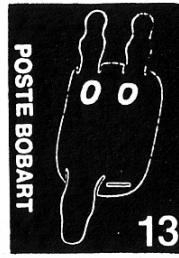
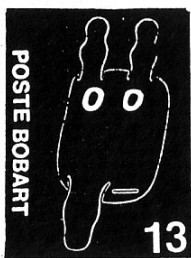
"The police said there was no evidence that he was in distress," said Helen Harrison, curator of the Pollock-Krasner House in Springs, whom Johnson had recently called for an appointment to draw a human skull from Pollock's collection. "They called all the local people in his ad-



dress book when he died, so we were among the first to hear." As Harrison tells it, Johnson apparently didn't "call out for help" before drowning. When the body was fished out of the 40-degree water, Harrison was told, "Ray looked composed and calm."

"Conundrums," Bourdon once said describing Johnson's work, "conundrums in which almost every element is an 'x,' and every 'solution' another riddle or pun." Considering the death of his long-time friend last week, Bourdon added, "It's just too peculiar. There was no more. There was no particular reason. There's really no explanation." All week, he said, people had been calling to say, "Watch your mail." So far, though, nothing has arrived.





R.

I.

P.

27-95

Gerard Barbot (NY)

[illegible]

10

RAY JOHNSON
44 WEST 7 STREET
LOCUST VALLEY
NEW YORK 10468

THE NEW YORK TIMES, APRIL 1, 1974

AUGUST 9, 1993

DEAR PERE
SOUSA,

THANK YOU
FOR THE BOX
WITH THE
MAIL BAG &
CATALOGS &
POSTCARDS.



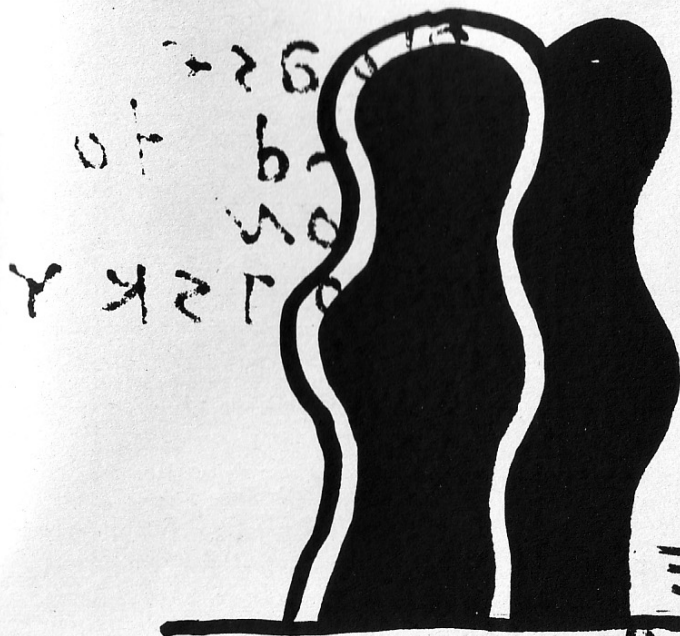
FAN CLUB At 8:30 tonight, the Paloma Picasso Fan Club meets, probably the first time it ever has. The gathering, free, at the Ronald Feldman Gallery, 33 East 74th Street (249-4050), will indicate how many admirers of the artist's daughter there are, and maybe even why.

The session is the inspiration of Ray Johnson, the artist who is the mainspring of the New York Correspondance School. Through this, he is in touch by mail constantly with several hundred friends through letters, poems, cartoons, collages and what-have-you. Not too long ago, he had an overflow meeting of Anna May Wong fans.

What happens at the fan meetings? Hard to say. Mr. Johnson says it all depends upon the audience and that the idea is communication through words and images. It's all happening on April Fool's Day, today, which should make for a touch of giddiness during the proceedings. It's a small gallery, so be prepared for a crush.

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RICHARD F. SHEPARD



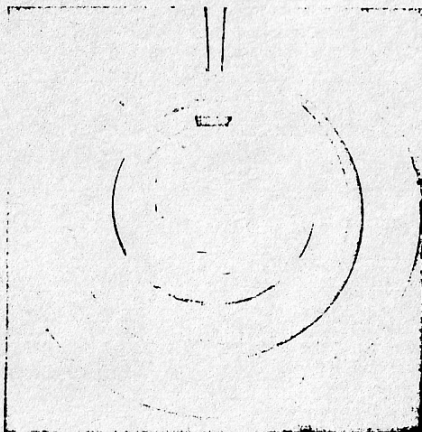
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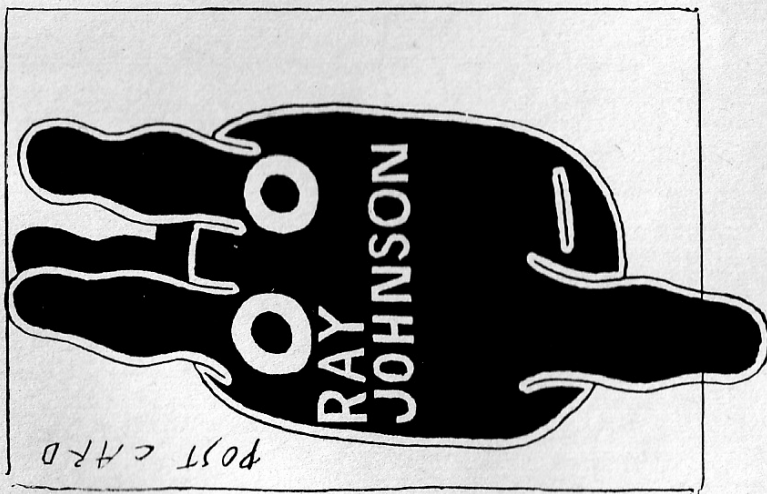
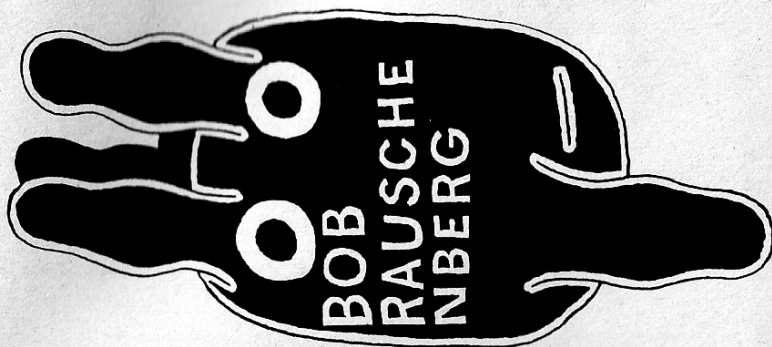
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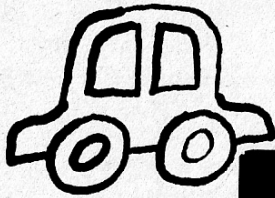
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Esta es solamente una parte de la Bibliografía sobre Ray Johnson que John Held Jr. menciona en su libro:

Held Jr., John, **Mail Art an Annotated Bibliography**, Metuchen, N.J.(USA), The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 1991.




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